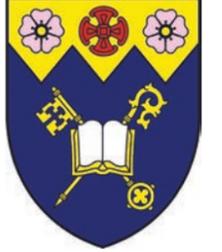




THE MESSENGER



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MAY 2024

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'For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.' John 13:15

St. Thomas Church Hosts Maundy Thursday Agape Meal | Love Feast in Wainwright

Story on page 6.

Pictured at left: Jonathan (right) washes the hands of his friend Cruz. Photo: Allan Samm

Athabasca hosts global community virtually during Holy Week

The Rev. Deacon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

The Most Rev. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, was among more than 70 people from around the world who participated in the Diocese of Athabasca's Holy week Bible Reading Marathon.

For 100 hours from Palm Sunday, at 1 pm, until 5 pm on Maundy Thursday, people read the bible on the Zoom online platform, which was broadcast via Facebook, continuously 24 hours a day.

The Most Rev. Dr. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, read during the early part of the marathon. The Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, read for an hour with two associates the next day. He even showed a small concern for us as we were hosting him at three am our time.



Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby participating in the Holy Week Bible Reading Marathon.

One person in Germany chose to read the bible in Flemish. Another person read in Shona, the language of Zimbabwe. In the Philippines, people read in multiple Filipino languages: including Ilocano, Kalinga Kankanaey and Tagalog. Personally, I find it wonderful how

somebody reading the bible in another language and follow it in my own bible. Last year, a person in Mozambique read in Portuguese and, surprisingly, I could follow all the way to the end of the chapter.

Christians from a variety of denominations

read from a selection of bible translations.

As one of the co-hosts, I observed people tuning in not only at their scheduled time to read but at various other times. Readers were concerned about time differences, especially from other countries, but almost everyone arrived before their scheduled time to read. One person missed a large part of his hour, but that was because the power had been off in his community! He booked an additional time to read later on. God is good.

I received kind messages from participants about how much they had enjoyed the experience. Many said they felt blessed.

It takes about 80 hours to read the Bible. This year it took a bit longer, but we ensure that everyone has a turn until Bishop David concludes the marathon at 5 pm on the Maundy Thursday.

The co-hosts, which also included Kathryn and Kevin Pedersen, my wife Jeannette, plus Bishop David, did lose some sleep, but it is a worthy event. Reading and Proclaiming God's Word is not arduous, but rather, exciting. Hope to see you take part next year.

Thanks be to God.



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Listening as a diocesan family to shape a good future together

The Rev. Dr. SCOTT SHARMAN
Canon to the Ordinary
Diocese of Edmonton

With the support of the Executive Council of the Diocese of Edmonton, Bishop Stephen London is asking every member of our diocese to consider where God is leading us as a church family.

The *Listening in Spirit | Shaping Our Future Together* process began this spring with a period of wide and careful listening to as many voices as possible about where and how we see the Holy Spirit of God at work in the church and world today, and the challenges and opportunities this presents to our parishes and diocese. These experiences, perspectives and reflections form our collective story.

Later this year, we will use these insights to engage in intentional and prayerful discussion and discernment about how to focus our Christ-inspired energies, utilise our Spirit-given resources, and pursue our Gospel-centered goals. In doing this, we will be shaping our future together as co-creators with God and one another. This is the next step in journeying as a diocesan family of churches Together on the Way. (Luke 24:13-35)

Our prayer is that the outcome of this process will help to guide our life and decision-making together as a diocese for at least the next five years.

The Executive Council has engaged a consultant on behalf of the diocese to help us thoughtfully consider our current state and position in the community and the broader world. Anna Bubel, of the firm Another Way, has decades of experience supporting organisations that are adapting and innovating in order to respond to new realities and needs. Each of the 46 parishes in the diocese will have an opportunity to interact with her during a scheduled Engagement Session.

Jacqui Chesterton, a member of our diocesan family, with great gifts in this type of work across a wide range of institutional contexts, is assisting Bubel. Throughout the listening process, Chesterton's main emphasis will be on research and data collection, and scheduling Parish Engagement Sessions until early June.

Bubel and Chesterton will use several key tools to help them do this important and timely work:

1. A survey of all parish members;
2. A survey of all clergy in the diocese;
3. Engagement Sessions with every parish in the diocese;
4. One-on-one interviews with 16 diocesan leaders who represent a reasonable



cross-section of perspectives.

What is a Parish Engagement Session?

The Parish Engagement Session is an opportunity to look at the pieces of the story we have gathered thus far, based on quantitative data, individual responses to the parishioner survey, and more. During this two-hour session, we will provide details around the Listening in Spirit process including key milestones and deliverables; we will validate the findings to date, focusing on the strengths within each parish; and we will explore the opportunities facing each parish. Each parish will also be provided with a summary report of findings, including various data collected, as well as an overview of the survey responses. All attendees will have the opportunity to expand on the findings, ask questions, provide clarifications, and further build out the story of their parish and its place in the diocese.

We hope that everyone participates with an open spirit and prayerful heart, trusting that we are all in this together. There will, undoubtedly, be differences of opinion about the most appropriate ways to move ahead on our journey, but with the Gospel at the center, we can trust our desired destination is the same.

The insight we glean through the listening and reflection will help us to see the opportunities and challenges in front of us, as parishes of this diocese, and as the diocese. We know that God is faithful and that God continues to have a plan for the ministry and witness of the Anglican way of following Jesus

in Edmonton and central Alberta. We have identified some core values that we believe define the kind of church God is calling us to be in the 2022 document *Finding Our Way*. This will serve as a vision to keep in front of us. Together our challenge is to figure out what we need to do to move in that direction, embody those commitments and sustain our witness and service for the long haul.

What does this have to do with Synod 2024?

The Diocese of Edmonton will hold the next regular gathering of Synod on October 18 to 19, 2024. By this point in the year, we anticipate a mid-way report on all the information and insight we have gathered through *Listening in Spirit | Shaping Our Future Together*. Like the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, we will then sit down together and seek to recognise Jesus anew amid all those wonderings, worries and words. Our Synod gathering will be shaped by reflecting on the findings of the report. We will focus on beginning to identify concrete plans and next steps. Again, like the early followers of Christ walking along on a new path, it is when we turn the uncertainty of our story and our journey over to God, that we begin to discern not our own next steps, but a God-given way. (Hearts Burning Within Us - Luke 24:32)

For more information, contact: Greg Heaton, Strategic Planning Project Coordinator, gheaton994@gmail.com; or the Rev. Dr. Scott Sharman, Canon to the Ordinary, ssharman@edmonton.anglican.ca

New AFC fund to honour ACC Archbishop Linda Nicholls

At a special dinner for the National House of Bishops, and in recognition of the pending retirement of Archbishop Linda Nicholls as Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Anne Germond announced the House's establishment of the Archbishop Linda Nicholls Theological Education Fund to provide bursaries for theological education to women in Canada.

"Archbishop Linda has made a great contribution to the ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada and the wider church over the years," said The Most Rev. David Edwards, Bishop of Fredericton, and Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada. "In many ways she has been a beacon and pathfinder for the ministry of women here, and overseas. It is very appropriate that this new fund is being established in her name. It is my hope that

many people will support it."

Archbishop Linda Nicholls was elected as 14th Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada in July 2019 and was the first woman to serve in this role.

"This new fund will increase our capacity to support theological education for women, specifically, and it will serve as an enduring reminder of Archbishop Nicholls' legacy to the Canadian Church," says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director, AFC.

Brubacher explains that the National House of Bishops will provide the initial capital to this Fund in the amount of \$20,000. Review of the applications and recommendations for funding will be made by AFC's Board of Directors as part of the regular quarterly review of grant applications.

Upon learning of the establishment of

the new Fund, Archbishop Nicholls said, "I was so delighted and touched by the gift of this fund seeded by the House of Bishops to support women, lay and ordained, in theological education. As a woman who has served during the growth of support for the ministries of women in recent decades, I pray that this fund will enable more women to live into their God-given gifts for the good of the whole Church and the world."

AFC members, donors, as well as groups and individuals across the Anglican Church of Canada are invited to make a gift to the Archbishop Linda Nicholls Theological Education Fund. Donations can be made by cheque, made out to the Anglican Foundation of Canada, with "Linda Nicholls bursary fund" in the memo line, online at www.anglicanfoundation.org/lindanichollsfund

Making space to use the gifts that invigorate us

One of the questions that used to come up a lot for me as a parish priest, and continues to be asked of me as a bishop, is about the apparent success of many of the big Evangelical churches. This is always asked with some anxiety by parishioners who know the struggle of our Anglican parishes. 'Why are they doing so well,' they ask. 'What are we doing wrong? Maybe we should be doing what they are doing.'

I agree, we should be doing some of the things they are doing. But people are often surprised to hear what I think we should be learning from them is not the obvious attraction. Often people will point to the music or the theology. But this is challenging for us as we have our own traditions, and our theological emphasis is often very different. I suggest that these are not the lessons to take from these churches. Rather, I believe the success of Evangelical churches lies in something we also can do. I think there are three intangible but important values every Christian church should have: excitement about God, clarity about the Gospel and mission of the church, and opportunities for every Christian to live out their faith. Let me reflect briefly on each of these three values.

The first is excitement about God. What I



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

always appreciate about talking with members of these large churches is they know God is a part of their everyday life, and they are excited about where God is acting. And this isn't necessarily about talking loudly about God all the time. It is more the realisation that we are in relationship with God in every part of our lives, from the big events to the very small ones. Every step of the way God is there guiding, blessing and walking with us.

This is about having a good and vibrant prayer relationship with God. This is a path that is open for every Christian.

The second is clarity about the Gospel and the mission of the church. Clarity is important because it allows us to know who we are and what we are about. In the Mainline churches, we have struggled with clarity because we have been spending important time leaving behind the baggage of a coercive faith. But we do have an amazing message of God's love and welcome, and we have a mission of partnering with God in God's mission to redeem the world. This value is related to the first because it allows us to know that our lives matter and have purpose in being

part of bringing God's blessing of love and forgiveness to the world in our lives.

The third, providing opportunities for every Christian to express the gifts that God has given them for ministry, is often more challenging for us. It is challenging because we don't have the resources to create the kind of programming that larger churches have. But again, I don't think this is the issue. Rather, I think it is about discerning what gifts are present in a congregation and finding ways to use them. It is about doing new things, as well as reinvigorating the things we have done in the past. The point though is to shift our focus from finding people to do the things we need done to learning what gifts people have and creating space for them to use those gifts.

All three of these values are not about trying to be someone else but invigorating in a good way who we already are.

Blessings,
+ Steve



Athabasca diocese celebrating Risen Lord for 150 years

Christ is Risen! Alleluia (Praise God)! We love to celebrate. Every year we celebrate the years since Jesus was born with New Year's Eve. We celebrate Christmas, we celebrate birthdays, we celebrate anniversaries. We celebrate yearly holidays. Throughout the bible, God encourages us to celebrate, to rejoice, to give thanks. Celebrating is good and healthy for it reminds us of the good things God has given us, and that there are times to be thankful amid our daily toils and troubles.

This spring and summer, we are celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Diocese of Athabasca. On May 5, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Rev. Dr. Linda Nicholls, will be blessing us with her presence at St. James' Cathedral in Peace River, at the 10:30 service. You are invited! That day will be the 150th year and 2nd day since the birth of our diocese. After the service, the cathedral parish is planning a lunch where you will have an opportunity to talk with the



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

Primate. Over Monday and Tuesday (May 6 and 7), I will, God willing, be introducing her to parishioners in Berwyn, Grimshaw, Fairview and Grande Prairie before she flies out again on May 7. In addition, parishes are planning events to celebrate the 150th anniversary in their own way – please join in!

Also, please come to the Family Camp being planned at Camp Artaban, from August 1-4. We can celebrate together with crafts, games, worship, music and free time.

There will be activities for children, young people and adults. Bring your family – plan your vacation time to include camp! You can stay at the camp (in bunkhouses or there are some spots for trailers, RVs), or hotels in Peace River or Grimshaw (within a 30-minute drive).

Another celebration is one I encourage you to focus on yearly. Easter to Pentecost is historically an ongoing joyful feast where we celebrate the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, amongst

us. Each Sunday in Easter (50 days in all) is a continuation of the Easter Sunday service (note: the days are called the Xth Sunday of Easter, not in Easter, unlike the other liturgical seasons). These are high and holy days for which we wear white while we worship, greet each other with 'Alleluia! Christ is Risen!' and, after the fasting and denial of Lent, we feast and embrace with thankfulness all the joys which God has blessed us with. Invite people over! Share with them the bounty which God has blessed you with. Give thanks to God with them. Share how Christ is walking with you and pray for each other with expectation and hope. Thank God for the many, many blessings in your life, and seek to share them with others as appropriate, healthy and helpful.

You have been given the risen life, the promise of resurrection, eternal shalom with God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. Grasp it! Hold onto it! Own it! Share it. May the shalom of Christ, the wholeness / completeness / health / wellness / life and love of the Kingdom of God, encircle you, surround you, uphold you and fill you, in Jesus' name. The Lord is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

+David

We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 1 MB, 200 dpi).

Submissions are due one month prior to the issue for which they are intended, for example: MAY 1 for JUNE-July 2024.

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Athabasca Diocese Celebrating 150-year Ministry

Following is an abridged talk on the history of the 150-year history of the Diocese of Athabasca, given by Bishop David Greenwood at the St. Patrick's Feast at St. Bartholomew's, Grimshaw.

Peter, John, James and Andrew were all fishermen. They were used to going out at night when the fish came closer to the surface and spending long hours on the water. Throwing their nets overboard, they would drag the heavy things back. Hopefully with many fish, sometimes with a few, most often with none. Hour after hour of back-breaking, hard work got them mentally and physically very strong, capable to endure and stay focused on the goal. They found the same in following Jesus. With Him, they spent hour after hour, but focused on people instead of fish. They went where the people were, they encouraged the people, they relieved and healed the people, and they told the people that in serving Christ, they could find true freedom.

After His resurrection, they told the good news that everything He said was true, and that the time had come: the kingdom of God is here, and it is time for the work in the kingdom to be done. They were still fishing. It was work for which they were very suited for though, for they still had to be mentally and physically very strong. And added to this, spiritually strong as well. Fishing, in that time and place, was hard work.

The Diocese of Athabasca has the same DNA in its blood: it has always been a mission diocese, a fishing diocese. On May 3, 1874, 150 years ago, William Carpenter Bompas was consecrated the first bishop of the Diocese of Athabasca, in Lambeth England. Four days later Bishop Bompas married his fiancé, and five days after that, he and Charlotte set off on their honeymoon – a 4-month trip to the Diocese of Athabasca (May 12 to Sept 24, 1874). He would never return to England.

At its creation, Athabasca comprised its current boundaries, plus the area of the Northwest Territories immediately north until the Arctic Ocean, the Yukon, the Peace Country of BC, and the entirety of land around Lake Athabasca. We attained our current boundaries in 1933 – we are maybe 1/10th of our original size.

William and Charlotte Bompas arrived in a foreign land together. They spent months learning the local languages. Then, he went out, journeying for months at a time, sharing the message of Christ with the people he met. He wrote in Slavey, Beaver, Dogrib, and Gwich'in languages so people could study the word of God. Charlotte stayed home, teaching the community around her about

the bible, leading them in prayer, providing them music on the harmonium and instructing the choir.

Initially, the diocese established three mission centres: Fort Chipewyan, Fort Vermilion, and Dunvegan, near present-day Grimshaw. To bring the Good News of Christ to the people, missionary priests traveled the countryside, visiting every encampment of people they could find along the way. They shared the Good News spiritually and also physically through medicines, food and clothing. They frequently encountered

cold, starvation, disease and sickness, and very rudimentary living conditions. Mortality was high, especially amongst children.

Our identity was always one of sharing the Good News and trying to show the Kingdom of God in practice through practical means. In the 1930s we ran a diocesan-wide social services outreach so that people could receive food, clothing and shelter, as there were not any provincial social services or welfare. Quite often the priest and his wife were also the local doctor and social service agency. The gospels and the prayer books were printed out in Cree syllabics so that the Word could be read by more people in the area.

The first recorded soup kitchen was at Dunvegan in 1886. The Rev.s Scott, Garrioch and Brick introduced farming to the Peace Country, in Fort Vermilion, at Dunvegan and Shaftesbury Mission by the present-day ferry.

The Van Ladies travelled the land in the summer, distributing Sunday School materials to all they found and holding bible camps.

While out on a pastoral visit in October 1934, the Rev. Lambertson of Fort Vermilion became lost for three days and was found frozen and unconscious. Though he survived, he never fully recovered, losing several toes, and eventually contracted tuberculosis, dying in 1941.

The Ven. D. Little supported Fort McMurray to Slave Lake from the town of Athabasca, traveling by boat, by foot, by dogsled and horseback.

Many others throughout our



Bishop David Greenwood travelled to Fort McMurray and then onto Fort Chipewyan at the beginning of March to spend time with the community of St. Paul the Apostle. The church of St. Paul the Apostle had its first service Easter Day in 1880 and for many years has been given the special designation of Pro Cathedral, in recognition of its work to share the Gospel. Many clergy came into the Athabasca diocese via Ft. Chipewyan as it was part of the trade route of the day. Bishop Greenwood celebrated the Eucharist at the church on March 3. Photos: Benita Greenwood

diocese sacrificed themselves for the sake of the Gospel and their fellow humans. There are many stories.

We are their legacy. Sharing the lordship of Christ Jesus and caring for all in need are part of our DNA and should always be held up and celebrated as integral to our being as Christ's body, the church.

In this abundance of ministry and need, our identity is also one of barely scraping by. We have almost never had enough money, never enough resources, never enough capability to meet the needs that were always there. This is still the situation today. Our identity is that we are fisher-people. We follow Christ, and we fish as He shows us. Like the earlier disciples, we have much hard work ahead of us. Fishing, in our time and place is hard work.

For the past 150 years, we have been a unique people. Never especially numerous, always tenuous, we have, in prayer, words and actions, raised up northern Alberta and its people to God, for His blessing, His guidance, His love. We are independent-minded, survivors, hard-working, loving people who strive to answer the needs of God's Kingdom while we are here on earth. We have been greatly blessed.

Though we may be small and insignificant in the world's eyes, in God's eyes you are known, you are loved, you matter. You are here because God has called you. God is calling you. You are God's child, His treasure. God called you and gave you His name. God equips you, God will complete His promise

in you. Let us together follow Christ into the future.

Like Peter, John, James and Andrew; like Bishop Bompas and all who have gone before us, you, too, will leave a legacy. You will give God great glory. And, you will hear Christ say to you: 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.'

Editor's note: Parishes of the present Athabasca diocese began marking the 150th anniversary in March when St. Bartholomew's in Grimshaw held a St. Patrick's Day event. Then, during Holy Week, the diocese hosted its annual Bible Reading Marathon.

In the summer months, St. Luke's, Beaverlodge will celebrate their regular Sunday worship in the style of 1874. Members of the congregation will wear period dress and worship with the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The Most Rev. Dr. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and a participant in the recent Bible Reading Marathon, will fly in from her visit to Rome, in time to preach at St. James' Cathedral, in Peace River, 10:30 am, on Sunday, May 5. In the afternoon, she will meet members of the various congregations from across the diocese who are invited to participate in the festivities on the actual anniversary weekend.

Archbishop Nicholls is tentatively scheduled to visit churches in Grimshaw and Berwyn, and then make flying visits to St. Helen's, Fairview and Christ Church, Grande Prairie enroute to the airport for her flight home on May 7.

'I Don't Want a Trickle. I Want a Flood.'

STEPHANIE OKOLO
St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton

I have been in the Christian faith for long enough to have heard all the success stories of people entering the church. I hear how it gave them new life; how water is now as sweet as nectar; and how the bible is an ambrosia for all their ails. The world has miraculously taken on a grander meaning, and they simply cannot believe they hadn't had faith in the power of Jesus Christ sooner.

While I do not want to take away from the personal experiences of other people; for the longest time, I simply could not relate. I'm reading verses from the bible. I'm trying to feel an ounce of emotion towards the story of Noah and the ark, or

Jonah and the whale, and these words, scribbled on parchment thousands upon thousands of years ago, turn into ashes within my palms. These passages trickle and run down my skin, drop by drop, and I feel nothing.

To take us back to 2020-2021, this was when my family and I, for a long period, stopped regularly attending church. However, once in a while, I would go back as a volunteer, or simply for youth group activities. And it was in these moments that I can say I was the most connected with God. While I wasn't listening to sermons every Sunday, nor was I taking communion, it didn't matter. I was surrounded by like-minded people who put caring for me and others above preaching about things that have been said so often they've begun

to lose meaning. Yes, you've told me Jesus is our lord and saviour. Now show me. Show me how He shapes your actions and has molded you into who you are; into something greater. My exuberance at volunteering did not come from verses, it came from the community. And, isn't that what church is meant to be? A community?

I don't want a trickle. I want a flood. Drown me in the raw emotion of what the church revealed to you. Show me the grief. Show me the ecstasy. I am a teenage girl. I feel everything, at all times, all at once. I do not need the church wrapped in a cocoon of repeated stories tied with a bow of half-hearted promises. The reason I couldn't relate to the success stories was not because the bible and the

church held no meaning. It was because I got so lost in running through the motions of saying what I was supposed to say, and doing what I was supposed to do, that I forgot going to church does not have to be an individual journey. It's not about individuals taking communion or singing the songs of worship (although both of these things can definitely enhance our experience). The church is not the building we enter; it's the people we enter it with.

Stephanie Okolo is currently in grade 11, and active in SJE youth. Her family has been at St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton for 14 years. She loves listening to all kinds of music, debate club and writing.

Weirdly Chaotic, Breathtakingly Beautiful Faith

MIRANDA MODAYIL
St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton

What is faith? Some people view it as an utmost belief in God, while to others it is having complete trust in someone or something. I believe that the answer lies in both. Faith is knowing that no matter what, God will love us. And it's also knowing that, so too, will our friends and family. It is having the confidence to be ourselves in every sense of the word because the people that matter will support us. It is falling and trusting someone to catch us. Putting our trust in someone is single-handedly probably the scariest and bravest

thing we can do, and yet, we do it every day. There's something beautiful about the way that happens.

We show faith in many ways. We show it by going to church or praying every day. But we also show it by trusting that for every low there will soon be a high. We show it by the way we can fall asleep on someone's shoulder, trusting them enough to be unconscious with them. We show it by telling people about things that matter to us. I don't believe there is any one right way to show faith. Rather, we show faith by little actions building up over time, however that looks for you.

I also believe that having faith

is necessary to being able to live life to the fullest. If we spend our entire lives full of mistrust and constantly feeling as though people are merely waiting for the perfect moment to betray us, we miss out on all the ways life is wonderful. Trusting friends, family, and even acquaintances to have our backs allows us to relax and engage in activities that we enjoy. It also allows for deeper and more meaningful relationships, because we don't have to constantly be watching our backs. We can just enjoy life and each other's company. Faith and life go hand in hand. We need faith to truly experience life, and we need life to build and show faith. Neither one

can fully exist without the other. Like threads intricately woven together, life and faith are forever intertwined.

Faith is complicated and, for many, it is constantly changing. However, we have our entire lives to figure out just what faith looks like to us. And what is faith to me? Faith is chaos. It's weird, and breathtaking. It's kind of intimidating, too. It's all of that and more. And I think that's beautiful. Faith is beautiful.

Miranda Modayil is a grade 8 student who attends St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton with her family. She is active in SJE youth, and likes books, music and writing.

Holy Trinity Lends Helping Hand to Edson Food Bank

BARB SHEPHERD
Holy Trinity, Edson

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

1 John 4:12

Our congregation, a shared ministry of Lutherans and Anglicans, selects our monthly missions annually at our AGM. Last year, we divided our contributions between local, service-based missions and national/international donation-focused missions. The feedback we received from members about the opportunity to volunteer locally as a group was very positive, so we committed to supporting several local community agencies again in 2024.

Our March mission was the Edson Food Bank Society. This local agency is volunteer-driven and is currently serving an unprecedented number of residents. Holy Trinity stalwart Sheryl Dubois worked with the Edson Food Bank to set up four work bees to accommodate the schedules of as many parishioners as possible. Under the guidance of Amy Pillage, program coordinator for the food bank, Holy Trinity volunteers, ages five and up, assisted with sorting, bagging and shelving items and prepping hampers and snack bags. Throughout the month, we also collect items on the "most



needed" list to keep food on the shelves.

Other local missions we have selected include: the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter (women's shelter), Edson Pregnancy Centre, Gabby's Big Heart (local fundraiser for the Stollery Children's Hospital), Reflections (adult drop-in centre), Edson LEAP Society (programs for children with developmental differences), and the Edson Kinettes Christmas Hamper Project. On Eagle's Wings is a regional mission we supported financially in previous years. When three of our members participated in programming in the north two summers ago, we were moved to support this program with a more hands-on approach; helping prepare materials and, we hope, more volunteer opportunities. The national missions we support with donations and education sessions are: Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, the Canadian Council for Refugees and the



Canadian Food Grains Bank.

In addition to personal and in-kind contributions to support these missions, we are fortunate to have Myrna Downer coordinate musical coffeeshops for us once or twice a year. These events include wonderful entertainment by local musicians and a silent auction, the proceeds of which support our missions. Another big contribution to our missions in 2023 came from Beverly Kazoleas who invited congregants to donate in support of her 200+-km pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago.

Invitation to Anglican Foundation of Canada Evensong

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) will host its Annual General Meeting of members on Wednesday, May 22, 7:30 pm, at All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, Edmonton. The AGM will be preceded by an Evensong service at 5:45 p.m. where the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, will preach; and the Rt. Rev. Stephen London, Bishop of Edmonton, will preside. Between the service and AGM, AFC will host a wine and cheese reception for guests in attendance.

"We are extending an invitation to all Anglicans in the province of Alberta to join us," says Dr. Scott Brubacher, AFC Executive Director. Attendees will be provided with the meeting agenda, the Foundation's audited financial statements for 2023, and the slate of 2024 board nominees for election.

In addition to the AGM, AFC will hold its spring Board of Directors meetings during the day on May 22 and May 23. "The AFC board currently meets four times per year — twice virtually and twice in-person," says Brubacher. "In recent years, our spring meeting and AGM have been held in locations outside of Toronto. As the national foundation for the Anglican Church of Canada, it is important for the

foundation's leaders to be engaged with and connected to the church across Canada."

The 2023 AGM and spring meetings were held in Halifax, and directors had the opportunity to hear from local grant recipients about how the funds have helped them provide ministry. Brubacher hopes it will be possible to hear about AFC-supported initiatives in the Diocese of Edmonton.

"Through a variety of partnerships and initiatives — including Say Yes! to Kids and the establishment of the David P. Jones Preaching Fund— and more than \$250,000 in grants since 2010, AFC and the people of the Edmonton diocese have been working together to fund transformational ministry. I look forward to this in-person visit as a time to celebrate the strengthening bond between us."

Visit www.anglicanfoundation.org, org/2024agm to pre-register to attend the AGM and reception, or email foundation@anglicanfoundation.org for more information.

See story on next page to read about how an AFC grant is supporting a community music program, at St. George's, Edmonton, for people with cognitive impairments.

St. Thomas' Welcomes Friends for Maundy Thursday and Easter

ALLAN SAMM
St. Thomas', Wainwright

Temporarily without a rector, St. Thomas Anglican Church in Wainwright found a creative and resourceful way to observe Maundy Thursday. The community held an Agape Meal, or Love Feast, incorporating an adapted washing of hands liturgy and music recorded by Alana Levandoski and Steve Bell.

Before the meal, 14 people took turns washing each other's hands, following the

example of Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples. The community prayed over an offering of bread and wine before sharing a potluck meal.

On Easter Sunday, St. Thomas' served breakfast sandwiches to their friends from St. Mary's, Edgerton; and St. Saviour's, Vermilion, a new take on their traditional sunrise service and breakfast. The meal was followed by a eucharist service with the Rev. Colleen Sanderson presiding.



St. Thomas', Perryvale to Host Motorcycle Camp

The Perryvale St. Thomas Anglican Church (The Happy Little Church in the Valley) will be hosting a Christian Motorcycle Ministry camp-out on June 21, 22 and 23. Participants will be able to celebrate both the longest day of the year and the June full moon!

The festival will kick off with a pancake breakfast on Saturday, followed by four separate bike tours, each heading out in different directions, on Saturday afternoon. There will be a wiener roast and Gospel-singing around the campfire on Saturday evening.

Sunday will include a pancake breakfast at 9 am, followed by an outdoor communion service (weather permitting) at 11 am. The weekend will conclude with a potluck lunch and farewell.

Everyone is welcome whether they have a motorcycle or not. There is space for holiday trailers, as well as tents. For more info, and to register, contact Bruno Wiske: 780 689-2944.



Easter Eucharist at St. Helen's, Fairview

ELLEN LUPICK
St. Helen's, Fairview

The people of St. Helen's Church in Fairview were fortunate to have Bishop David Greenwood with them for an Easter Sunday Eucharist in the afternoon. This was the third service of the day for Bishop Greenwood, the prior two being St. Bartholomew's in Grimshaw and Christ Church in Berwyn.

St. Helen's Church in Fairview is a storefront church in the Fairview Mall, where it has been located for several years, after the sale of the former church building in the town. The church is located across the mall from the food bank and St. Helen's worship space is shared with the local Lutheran Church.



Join AFC and celebrate *Say Yes! to Kids* Sunday on June 2nd

Be part of the movement to grow a brighter future for children, youth, and young adults!

Visit anglicanfoundation.org/sytkSunday

This is Our Missional



Music Mends Minds a Supportive Community for People with Cognitive Impairment and Their Caregivers

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

"Who remembers Elvis?" a guitarist strumming the chords of "Love Me Tender," asks a small group of older adults sitting in the front pews of St. George's Anglican Church in Edmonton.

"Oh, yes! Ed Sullivan instructed his cameraman to only film him from the waist up," a member of the group is quick to reply.

"The first date I went on was to see Blue Hawaii in a theatre in South Africa," says another.

It is a Tuesday morning in March, the first day of spring, and as sunlight illuminates a wall of stained-glass windows, music director Alieda Jaehn and pianist Cherie Larson ask if anyone has a request.

"We haven't done "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," someone shouts enthusiastically. This may be the first time Larson, also a cellist and violinist, plays the popular tune on the church's baby grand piano. As she looks for the music, Jaehn shares about her once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a batgirl for Team Japan at the inaugural Women's Baseball World Cup, held in Edmonton when she was a teenager.

"Who remembers Cracker Jacks?" someone else asks.

"A lot of what happens at Music Mends Minds is brought forward by the storytelling of the group," says Jaehn. "I will have songs in mind to start us off, especially if people are of a pensive mind that day, but people can request anything."

Music Mends Minds (MMM) is a supportive community that was started in Los Angeles by a woman whose husband had Parkinson's disease and dementia. When she sought an explanation as to why he was still able to play piano even as his cognitive impairment progressed, the couple's neurologist explained that musical memory pathways are different and persist long after the loss of recent memory pathways.

Supported by Rotary International, MMM has chapters across the U.S. The program uses music to engage people who have a cognitive impairment and their companions. Dr. Anne Fanning, a retired physician and educator, approached the Rev. Madeleine Urion to see if St. George's Anglican Church, located just blocks from the University of Alberta Hospital and Cross Cancer Institute of Alberta, would consider hosting a local MMM chapter.

"I had a friend who loved music and was involved with this program in the latter years of his life with dementia," says Fanning, 84. "His widow now says MMM was the best part of those years. At my age you look around and see a lot of people with challenges as the disease progresses. What's challenging is that they have lost many connections," says Fanning, who was awarded the Order of Canada for her work on trying to eliminate tuberculosis in Canada. She arrives early every week with an armload of songbooks, ready to greet people as they make their way down St. George's wide sidewalk straight into the church.

Currently, the MMM group consists of around 20 members and their caregivers.

Fanning predicts this number will continue to grow "as more people hear about us. I think there are a lot of people out there who would really enjoy being here."

Today, Fanning also gives the participants a list of lovingly curated song selections, acknowledging Jill and Vince Lurie for providing them.

"My husband and I love happy music, so I came up with a list of fun songs for everyone," says Jill. "I've loved every minute of Music Mends Minds since we started coming in October. I wish we could have it more than once a week. Music feeds the soul and lifts your spirit. It really is good for people with dementia and seniors, in general."

Jill's husband Vince was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment, in 2017. When he had a knee replacement, "the anesthesia really did a number on him," she says. "It developed into dementia pretty fast."

While Jill has been looking for "every opportunity" for Vince to be involved in activities and socialise, she has yet to come across a local medical program specifically designed for someone who has dementia. "This (MMM) has been a blessing to us both.

"Being a caregiver is very stressful," she adds. "But when we walk out of here, I'm like a new woman. It's so relaxing to forget all your problems and just have fun."

In addition to its partnership with St. George's, the MMM Society has forged connections with local neurologists and Fanning anticipates additional doctors and clinicians who practice medicine in the neurological, geriatric and related fields, as well as the Alzheimer's Society and Parkinson's Society, to become referring partners in the future.

"St. George's is small and aging, but we have a huge amount of spirit," says Urion. "We've been recognising more and more that, rather than to start our own groups, our call as the church is to help groups that are already formed to flourish."

"Our vestry very quickly saw MMM as an amazing opportunity for people experiencing cognitive loss, be it from an organic condition or injury, to be in relationship through music."

Urion humbly observes that musical expression, and the quality and quantity of music at St. George's, could be even "more important to our congregation than the sermons."

A parish team helps coordinate the Tuesday morning gatherings, doing all they can to make the participants feel welcome. Funding from the Anglican Foundation of Canada will ensure



Above: at St. George's, Edmonton, Alieda Jaehn and Cherie Larson lead the Music Mends Minds' community in another song; Left: Dr. Anne Fanning, founder of the local group, sings along.

MMM continues once a week at St. George's until June 18.

"It's wonderful when parishes can start something based on the expertise, capacity and availability of the people who are in the Sunday

morning congregation," says Urion. "But that's not always the case anymore. I think we have to look beyond our own parishes to the Body of Christ in the world. The future of the church is letting go of what is conventional and broadly imagining our purpose, our relevance and our resources.

"One-third of our congregation actually worships online, because they are home, or in extended care, and they can't get here on a Sunday morning." Accessibility and inclusion are "primary values" of St. George's community.

"Jesus was all about bringing people who are isolated into the heart of the community and finding healing there, which is exactly what Music Mends Minds does," Urion says.

St. Patrick's Day has just passed, and Jaehn uses the occasion to introduce "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," and "Danny Boy." Many members of the group smile and sing along. Someone comments on how beautiful the piano sounds accompanying the beloved tunes.

"Music is one of the only things that engages all parts of the brain, right and left sides, as well as our core memories," says Jaehn whose passion for music therapy and ability to lead conversation make her a natural fit for the MMM community. "When we're 12 years old and make choices in music and then we hear that song again at age 60 or 70, we go, 'Oh, this is taking me right back there.'"

"We don't know exactly what people in the room are dealing with, we just know that we're here to be together and make music. While we acknowledge and hold space for their struggles, we're also acknowledging that this is a space to just be, in whatever state we're in."

For more information and to register for Music Mends Minds, call or email Dr. Anne Fanning at 780-966-9861; anne.fanning@ualberta.ca.

Protecting sacredness of creation a responsibility we all share

WILLIAM WHISTON
Athabasca Diocese

"They were like men coming up with axes to a grove of trees; they broke down all your carved work with hatchets and hammers. They set fire to your holy place; they defiled the dwelling place of your name and razed it to the ground."
Psalm 74:5-6

'One, two, three... go, go, go!' The truck lurches free from the sand with relieved shouts of joy. I had taken a wrong turn on a winding trail lined with jack pine, bearberry and blueberry shrubs, 90 km north of Fort McMurray, and sunk my two-wheel drive Dakota deep into a sandy hole. I'm thankful for some new friends who have come on the trip and brought with them both their ingenuity and capable off-road equipped truck. With a few adjustments and a second look at the map we are on our way again to our destination, the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex.

McClelland Lake was on my radar because of my involvement with the Borealis Paddling Club, but I hadn't had a chance to make the trip yet. In past years, the club had made an annual pilgrimage in the spring to camp out, paddle the clear shallow water and observe migrating birds and other curiosities, not the least of which include rare carnivorous plants that call the lake home. Armed with the club map, past trip reports and enough confidence on the route to be dangerous, I was the local expert.

As the September sun dipped below the horizon, we arrived at the landing at McClelland Lake, a fine campsite equipped with a substantial fire pit, a wind shield and a rustic outhouse. Before long, tents were set up and a fire was underway. Sherry, a retired teacher and native plant expert from Edmonton, brought enough tea for everyone, and with a shared love for both adventure and a desire to protect the places we belong to, we all got along quite well. Our conversation lasted long into the night, capped off by a spectacular shooting star. Its tail stretched across the sky, as if to say, in a flash of brilliance, that this place and this short time we were to share here were set apart, or as my church friends might call it, sacred.

At daybreak, an orange glow carpeted the campsite as the sun coaxed us out of our slumber. Our hearts were soon warmed, as well, with fresh coffee and bacon. We were in no particular hurry to take down camp and savoured the sanctity of the day. By noon, with the sun now overhead, we launched our canoes and began to skirt the western shore of the lake.



Photo: Nature Alberta / Twitter

One is immediately taken by the wild rice which grows in abundance along the shore. The words of Psalm 65 come to mind: *"You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth."*

As we brushed by the cornucopia of wild grain, the ripe heads of rice inevitably began to fall into our canoes. The unintentional harvest was plentiful and the feeling was sacramental. Here the visible sign was a pristine wilderness abounding in riches and the grace was the way in which the creation filled out hearts with gladness. It's a feeling that is difficult to articulate, but known by the many who slow down just enough to receive what is freely offered, with no need for force or instruments of destruction.

All at once the wild rice gave way to a small inlet, and before us stretched a vast and magnificent landscape marked by the variegated pattern of low-lying shrubs in full autumn glory — rich crimsons, dazzling golds and deep greens. Further still lay stands of stunted spruce. We had arrived at the edge of the McClelland Lake patterned fen — a striking wetland system that has developed for more than 8,000 years. While the unique pattern of strings (treed peat ridges) and flarks (shallow water pools) are best appreciated from above, its diversity is discerned by those who choose to

look closely.

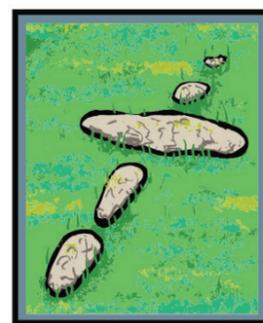
With careful footsteps, we ventured out onto the spongy ground. The whole surface bounces gently up and down — some estimates put the complex system of circulating water at up to eight meters deep. The wetland filters water from the surrounding area as it makes its way north. Lately, it's been working overtime as it cleans up the toxins leached indiscriminately from oil sands mining operations surrounding it in every direction. Only a generation ago, families who lived on the land at McClelland Lake would drink the pristine water, but they no longer feel that the practice is safe to continue. Still, the area acts as a refuge in a sea of surface mines

and toxic tailings ponds for birds to rest during the spring migration. The wetland just so happens to sit at the confluence of all four major flyways.

It's easy when you visit the land to understand, almost intrinsically, the need to protect it from the grips of industry. It's been slated for protection several times including, most notably, in the Special Places process of 1998, but lobbying efforts of oil groups have thwarted each respective attempt, and now Suncor, under the leadership of former ExxonMobil executive Rich Kruger, plans to have shovels in the ground by as early as 2025. The damage would be irreversible.

I'm no stranger to the nuance of living in the heart of the oil sands. Many of the folks who join me in the pews every Sunday are here because of a livelihood made possible by the shiftwork north of town. The work can be rewarding even despite the cognitive dissonance — a friend once told me that she felt she had to sell a part of her soul to work here. And yet still, the endless pursuit of wealth must at some point end and be tempered with the wisdom that the creation is sacred and that we have a responsibility to "strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth" — for us, and for the generations to come. (General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, "The Baptismal Covenant," *The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada*, p. 159)

Please consider writing to your elected officials about protecting the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex. For more info, visit: <https://albertawilderness.ca/>



Artist: Wilfrid Dieter, Ignite Media

STONES CRY OUT: *Praying with the Land*

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